

RESULTS OF A SURVEY OF VOTERS IN THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN REGION

PREPARED FOR:
2030 GROUP

Methodology

- Sample Size: n=1,000 Adults 21+
 - Virginia: Fairfax County, Arlington County, City of Alexandria, Prince William County, Loudoun County;
 - Maryland: Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Frederick County, Charles County; and
 - District of Columbia
- Margin of Error: Plus or minus 3.1%
- Interview Dates: August 6-12, 2010

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POLL ANALYSIS

1. Mood of the Region.

Nine-in-ten (90%) Washington area residents are positive about the area's local economic conditions. [\[TABLE 1\]](#)

One quarter (26%) say the region's economy is "excellent" with another 64% rating it as "good." Across the region, the positive ratings range from a high of 96% in Alexandria/Arlington and 95% in the District to 79% in Frederick County. Overall, Virginia residents (98% positive) tend to be a bit more positive than Maryland residents (85% positive).

Traffic congestion is seen as the biggest threat to the Washington region's quality of life; 67% pick this as their first (47%) or second (20%) choice from a list of eight items. [\[TABLE 2\]](#)

Ranked far below traffic congestion are high taxes (27%), economic slowdown (23%), a weak public school system (21%), crime (18%), and a deteriorating Metro system (18%).

As a top choice, traffic congestion is a much bigger concern to NOVA residents (60%) than it is for either Maryland (38%) or DC (23%) residents. Also, outer Metro residents (54%) are slightly more concerned than inner Metro area residents (42%).

2. **Regional Planning.**

By a decisive 6:1 margin, 81% of Washington region residents say it is “better to have a regional plan to maximize opportunities for a stronger regional economy” than say there is “no need to have a regional plan because economic growth will just happen on its own”. [TABLE 3] This strong verdict in favor of a regional plan for future economic growth occurs despite the 90% positive rating for today’s local economy.

When it comes to cooperation among the region’s political jurisdictions to promote regional economic growth there is a significant gap between the perception of current levels of cooperation and the desired level of cooperation...

- 45% say local jurisdictions cooperate now (compared to 42% who say they work more as “rivals in competition with one another”), but
- 80% prefer they work together in a cooperative way rather than in competition with one another. [TABLE 4]

Thus, there is a 35-point gap between how area residents think local jurisdictions currently work together to promote regional growth and how they want them to cooperate.

The strong desire for regional cooperation to best strengthen the region’s economy extends across all jurisdictions topping 75% everywhere but Frederick County (where it is still 73%).

3. **Opinions of a New Regional Structure.**

By a 48% to 42% margin, area residents think the Greater Washington region should have ... “a new regional structure that can focus on and operate for the needs of the entire region” rather than keep things the way they are today “with various city, county, and state governments each operating on their own.” [TABLE 5]

DC residents (55-32) express a slightly stronger preference for a new regional structure than do NOVA (47-44) or Maryland (48-42) residents.

If a new regional structure were put in place, [TABLE 6] ...

- 80% support it having some form of accountable membership that is either elected or appointed;
- 59% support it being in charge of regional planning – pro-regional structure respondents are 76-17 in favor of this “power,” those preferring the current structure are 40-53 with a majority against;
- 47% support it having legal authority to implement regional plans – 76-17 among pro-regional structure respondents, 30-63 majority against among those preferring the current structure; and
- 39% support it having some form of regional taxing authority – 54-39 among supporters; 22-72 majority against among those preferring the current structure.

4. **Opinion of Overall Regional Cooperation for Emergencies.**

By 56% to 38%, Washington area residents would prefer “a better coordinated regional response system” to major emergency events such as a large snowstorm or terrorist attack. [[TABLE 7](#)]

Interest in a strong regional response plan for emergencies is highest in Maryland (61%) and DC (70%), but is more of a split verdict in Virginia (48-45) largely because of some resistance among Alexandria/Arlington and Loudoun residents.

5. **Regional Growth: Best Way to Handle Housing, Transportation, and School over Next 20 Years.**

By 51% to 44%, regional residents say it would be better to have some form of “stronger regional structure to plan and direct where new jobs and housing should go” than to rely on the current system where local and county governments “go it alone” in handling the infrastructure demands generated by the projected job growth over the next 20 years.

[[TABLE 8](#)]

Judgment splits evenly in NOVA and in the outer ring of counties, but a regional structure approach to directing where new jobs and housing for these new workers is preferred among DC and Maryland residents.

Greatest support for a regional structure involvement comes on the issue of transportation. Two thirds (66%) or all regional residents support a regional approach to “plan for and manage traffic flow and road capacity needs.” [[TABLE 9](#)]

Just 28% support the status quo where the states and District handle transportation within their borders; a clear minority in each jurisdiction.

Most residents, however, defend the status quo of local jurisdiction control when it comes to schools. [[TABLE 10](#)] Thanks to a 58% majority in Northern Virginia, the overall region-wide verdict on the best way to ensure quality schools “produce students with needed skills to fill” the projected 1.6 million new jobs over the next 20 years is to

continue with the current local jurisdiction control (50%) as opposed to a new regional approach (44%).

Alexandria/Arlington (65%) and Fairfax (65%) are most satisfied with local control of schools while Prince George's County residents embrace a regional approach by 65% to 28% with Charles County close behind at 60% to 32%.

When it comes to housing, area residents split 48% (current system of local government control) to 46% (new strong regional structure) as the best way to meet the project growth in housing demand. [[TABLE 11](#)]

DC residents (55%) express greatest support for the “stronger regional structure” approach to encourage “new denser or village-style housing development in areas where commuters can be reduced and transportation system capacity maximized.”

6. **Overall Support for a Stronger Regional Structure.**

Seventy-four percent (74%) of area residents say it would be a positive factor to have “some form of a new stronger regional structure that worked on region wide issues”. [TABLE 12]

This overwhelming support comes when the “region-wide” issues are specified – Metrorail funding, traffic congestion, workforce skills, and housing the growing workforce – as well as when “a stronger regional structure” is not pitted as a direct choice against the current local government jurisdictions, but rather as an “add-on” component.

Support exceeds 70% in all jurisdictions and within both inner and outer rings.

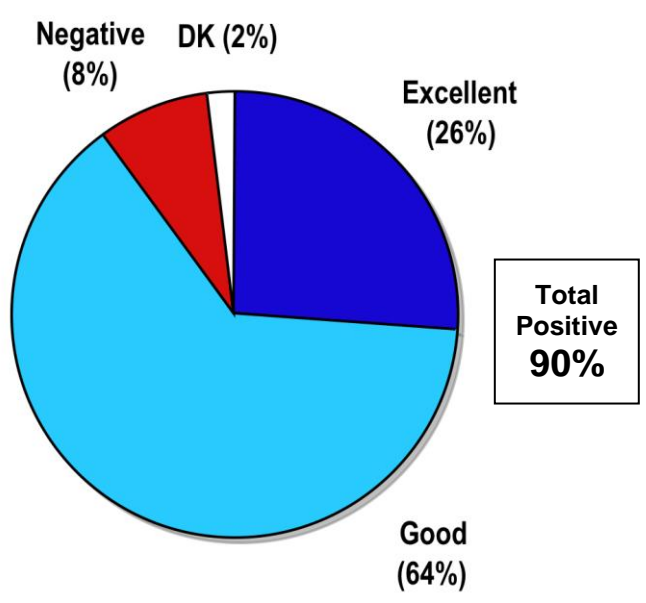
7. **Mechanics of a New Stronger Regional Structure.**

If there were to be a new stronger regional structure...

- 53% support it being led by “local elected officials” from each of the area’s jurisdictions as opposed to 36% who prefer appointed qualified non-elected citizens. [TABLE 13]

Table 1

Rating of Local Economy



By Area

	<u>Pos-Neg</u> %
DC	95-4
Montgomery	88-10
Prince George's	87-12
Arl/Alex	96-4
Fairfax	94-5
Loudoun/PW	92-7
Frederick	79-13
Charles	81-15

Table 2

Biggest Threat to Quality of Life

Thinking ahead over the next 20 years ... to the year 2030 ... which of the following 8 factors do you think is the BIGGEST THREAT to harm the Washington Metropolitan area's overall quality of life?

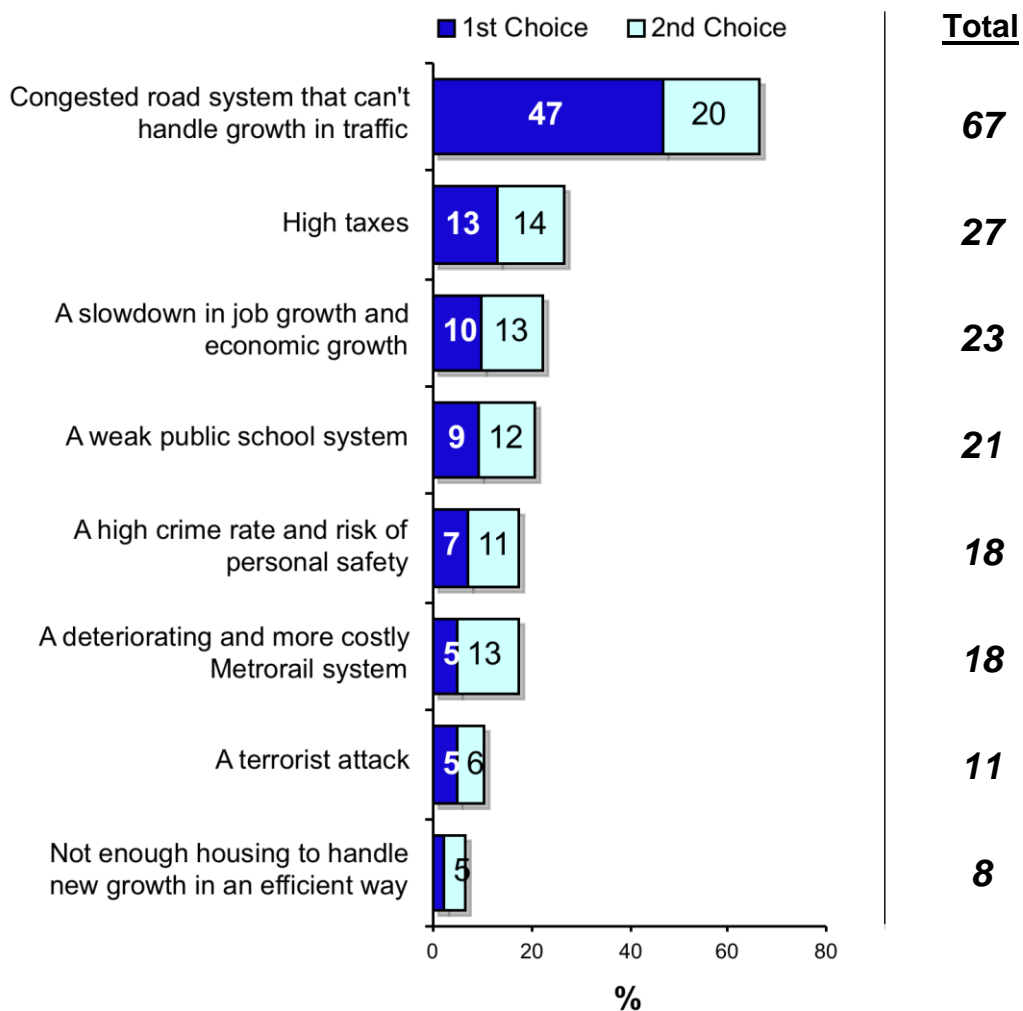


Table 3

Regional Economy Over Next 20 Years: Plan or Not?

Thinking ahead over the next 20 years, do you feel that the way the Washington Metro region's economy is structured that...?

- a. There is NO need to have a regional plan to sustain and encourage economic growth because it will just happen on its own.

--OR--

- b. It would be better to have a regional plan to maximize opportunities for a stronger regional economy.

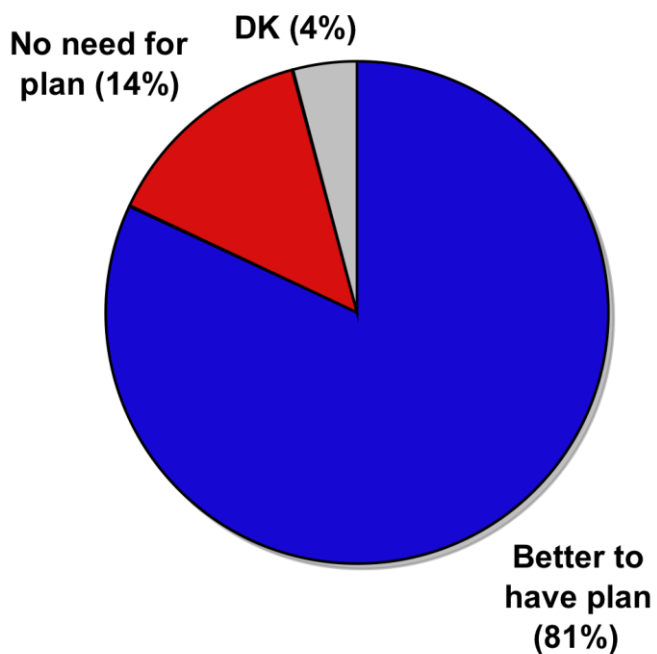


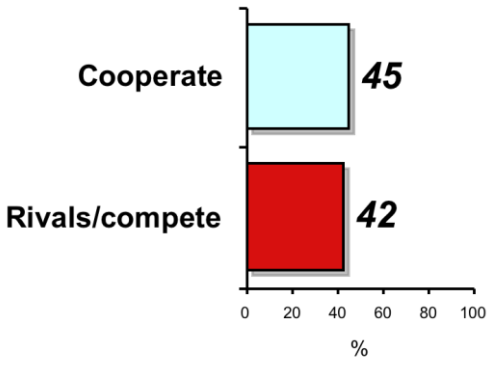
Table 4

Regional Cooperation: Current Perception vs. Preference

Current Perception:

Thinking about the various political jurisdictions in and around the Washington Metro area, do these jurisdictions...?

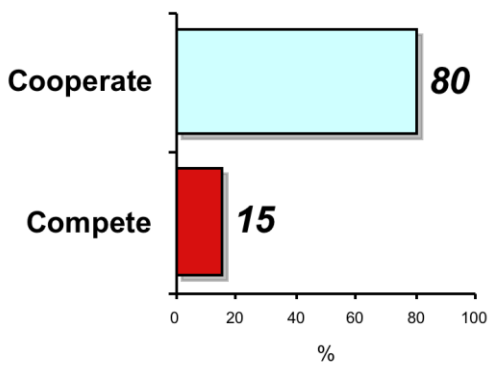
- Work more in a cooperative way to promote the region's economic health.
OR
- Work more as rivals in competition with one another.



Preference:

And, in your mind, should these political jurisdictions...?

- Work in competition with each other to provide the strongest economy and services to their own residents..
OR
- Work in cooperation with one another to best strengthen the region's economy and quality of life.



Difference in Perception vs. Preference

-35

+27

Table 5

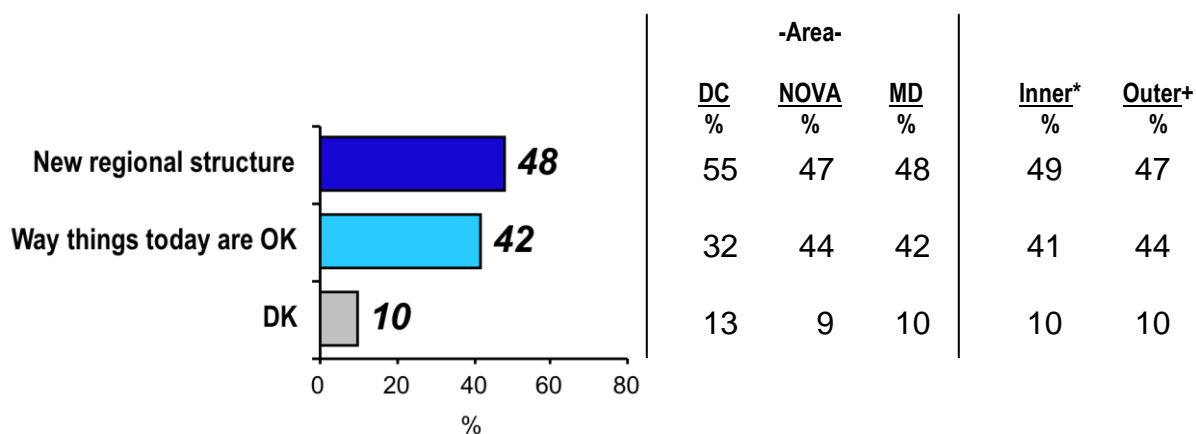
Desire for New Regional Structure

Do you think the Greater Washington region should have ...?

- *A new regional structure that can focus on and operate for the needs of the entire region.*

--OR--

- *Is the way things are today with the various city, county and state governments each operating on their own working fine as is.*



* Arlington/Alexandria/Fairfax/Montgomery/PG/DC
 + Frederick/Charles/Loudoun/PW

Table 6

Preferred “Powers” for a Regional Structure

If there were to be a new regional structure established that included involvement from all levels of local, state and federal governments as well as representatives from the region's business, non-profit and academic sectors, do you think this organization should...?

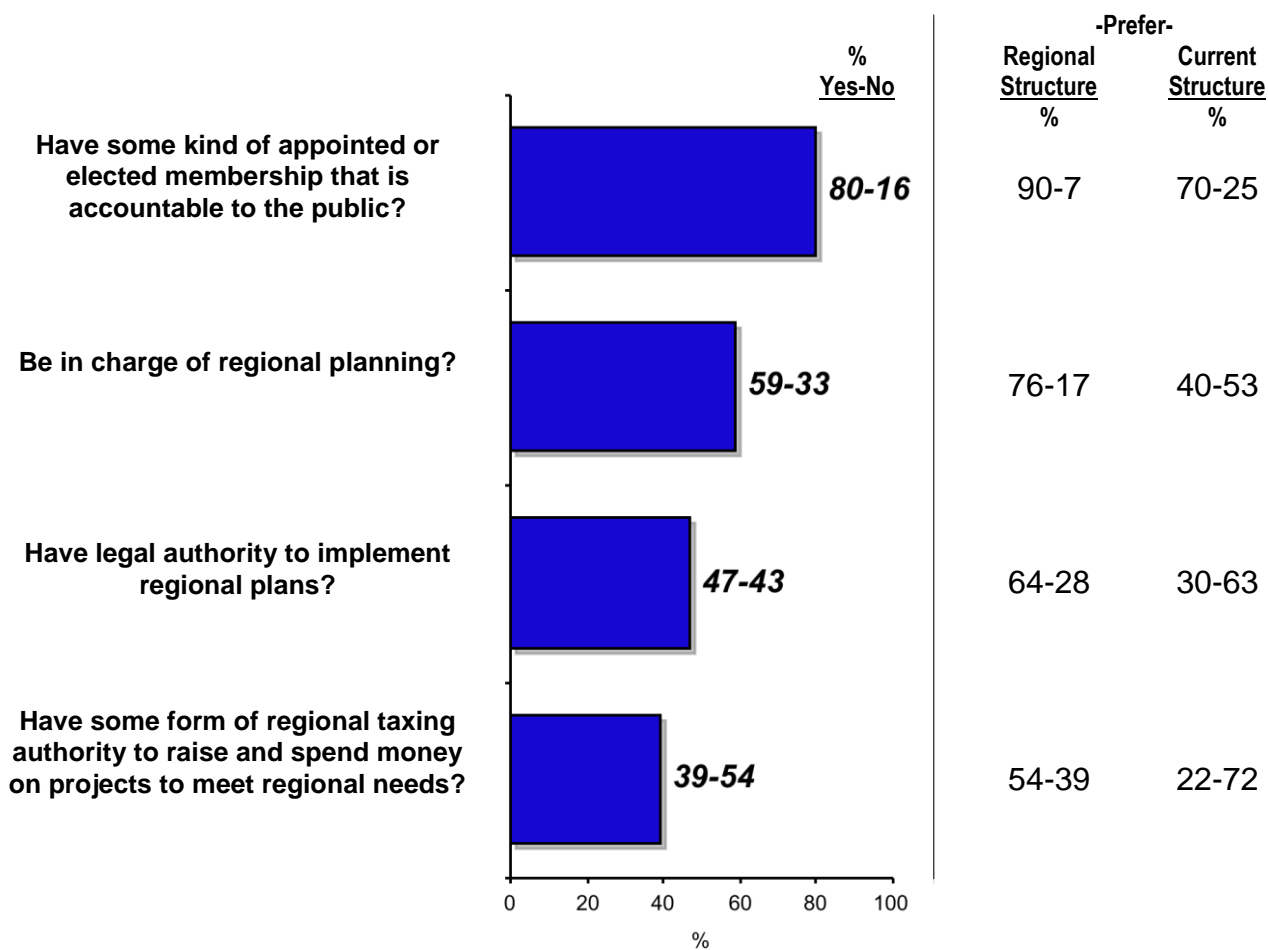


Table 7

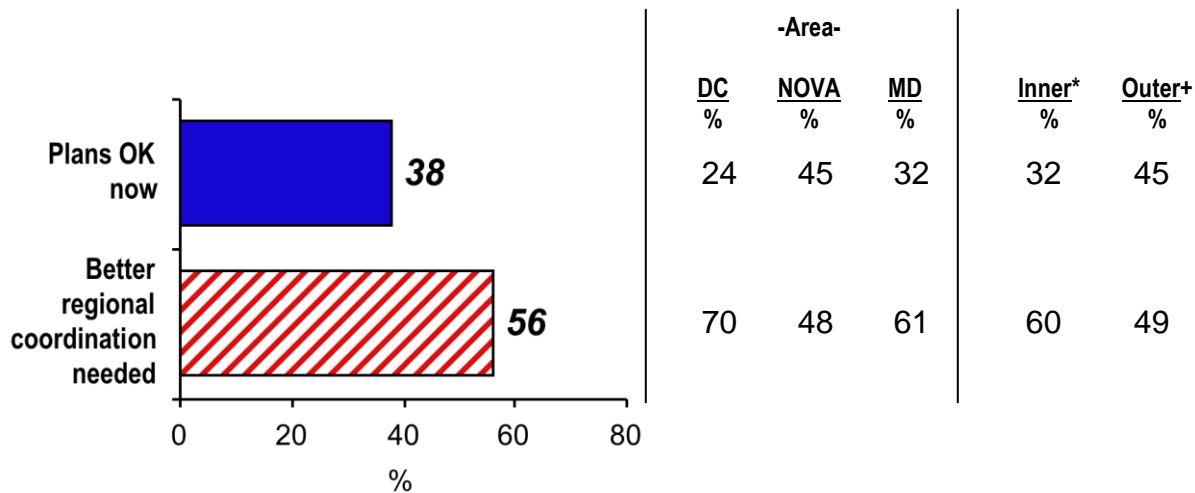
Regional Cooperation for Emergencies: OK Now vs. Better Needed

If there were to be some major traumatic event in this area – such as a repeat of last winter’s snowstorms or a terrorist attack, do you feel that...?

- *The various local governments’ emergency response plans are in place and sufficient to handle this.*

--OR--

- *Some better form of a coordinated regional emergency response system is needed.*



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Table 8

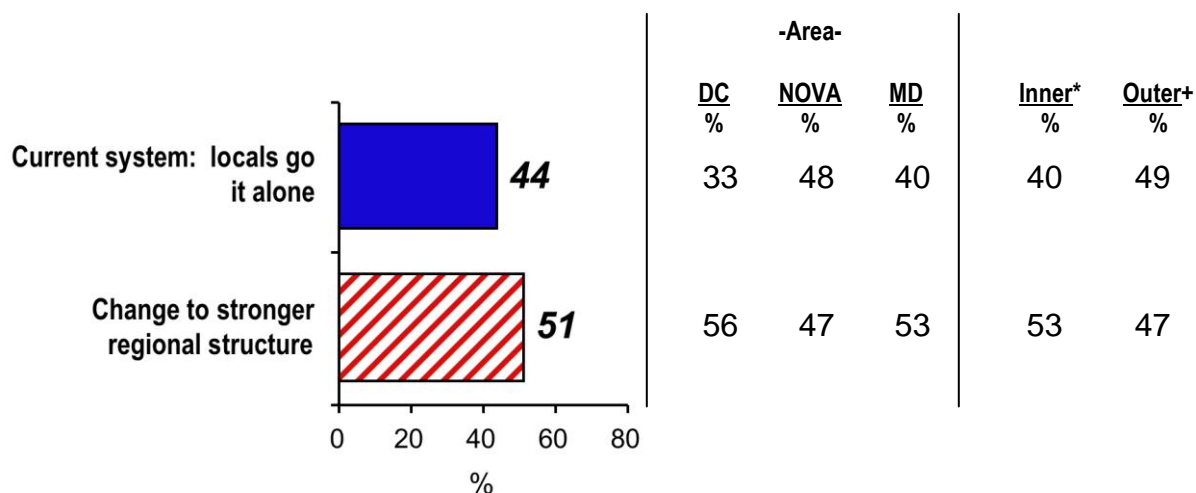
Best Approach to Handle Region’s Job and Housing Growth

Experts predict that the Washington Metropolitan region will grow over the next 20 years adding approximately 1.6 million new jobs and the need for 35 thousand new housing units a year for new workers to live. Which approach to handling this growth do you most prefer?

- The current system where local County and City governments go it alone handling their own planning for how much business activity and jobs they want, where and how much housing will be allowed, and how to handle the transportation and schools impacts.

--OR--

- To have some form of a stronger regional structure to plan and direct where new jobs and housing should go to best connect with the region’s transportation network.



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Table 9

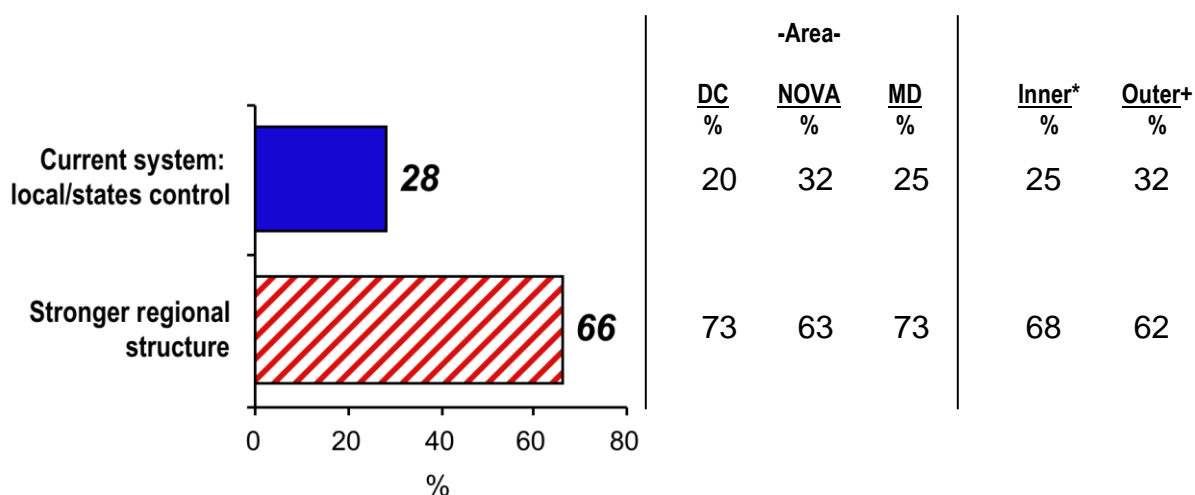
Best Approach to Meeting Region’s Transportation Needs

Which of these do you think is a better approach to meeting the Washington Metropolitan region’s traffic challenges over the next 20 years?

- *Continue with the current system where the states of Maryland Virginia as well as DC plan for and control what gets done with existing and new roads within their borders.*

--OR--

- *Have a stronger regional structure to plan for and manage traffic flow and road capacity needs on a region-wide level.*



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Table 10

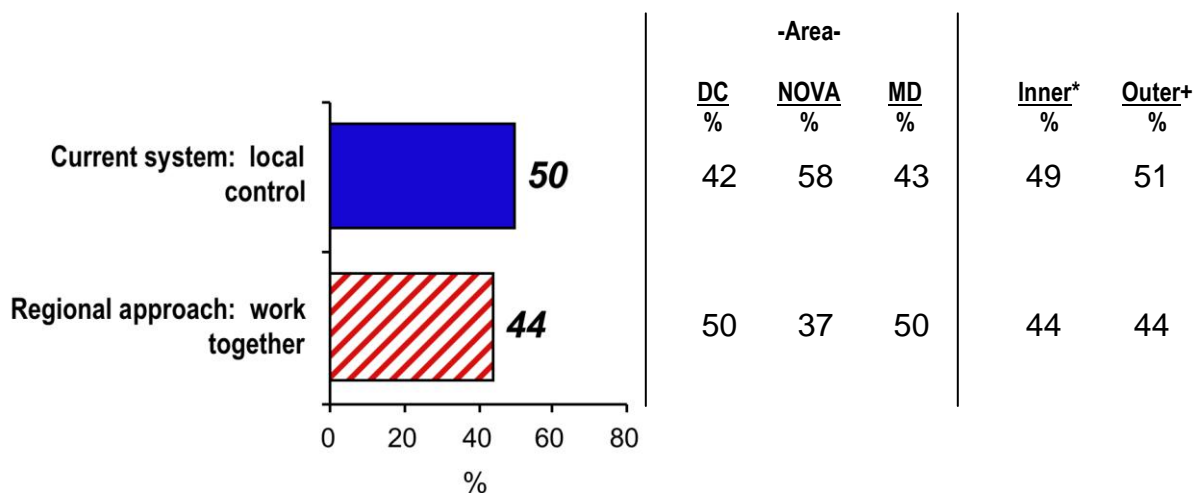
Best Approach to Region's School Systems

Given the forecast for an increase of 1.6 million new jobs for the Washington region over the next 20 years, which approach do you feel would be the best way to insure the highest quality in public schools that would produce students with needed skills to fill these jobs?

- Continue with the current system where local county and city governments control funding and standards for their public schools.

--OR--

- Have a regional approach so school districts work together more as one unit to set standards and policies for providing universally high quality educations.



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Table 11

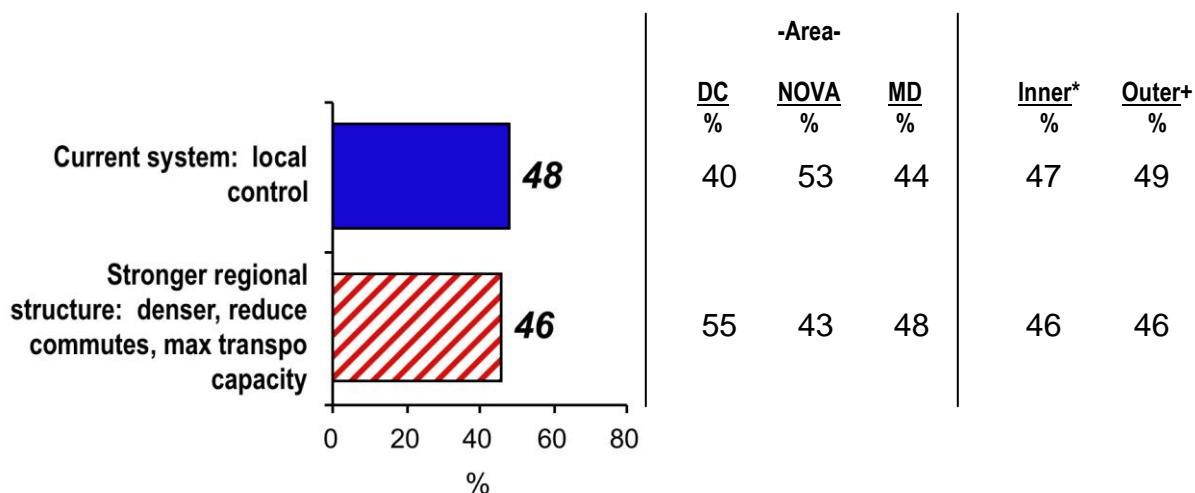
Best Approach to Housing as Region Grows

And when it comes to housing, which approach to meeting the need for the projected 35 thousand new housing units needed per year do you think it best?

- Continue with the current system where local county and city governments control the amount and type of new housing they allow to be built.

--OR--

- Have some form of stronger regional structure and cooperation to encourage new denser or village-style housing developments in areas where commutes can be reduced and transportation system capacity can be maximized.



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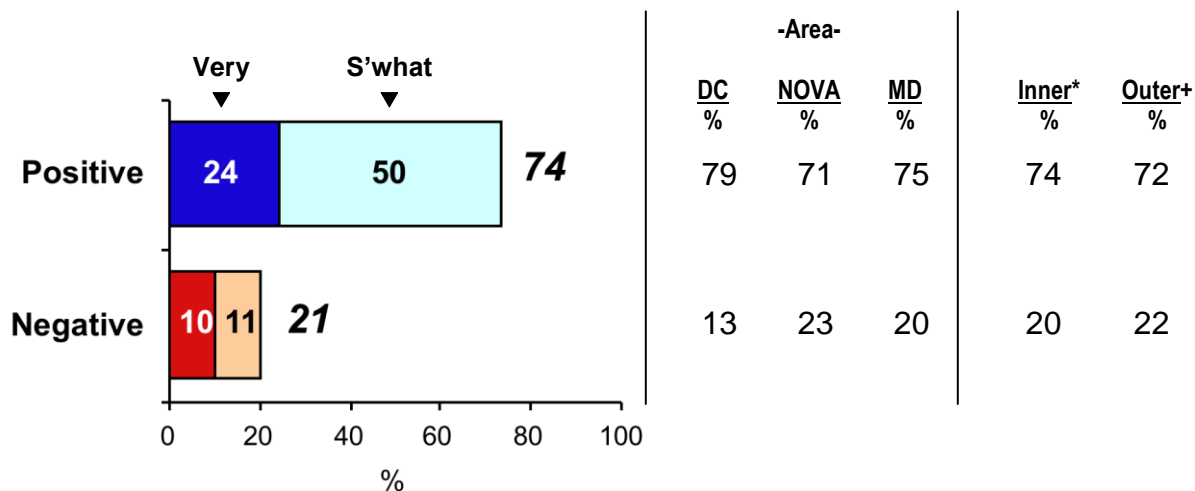
Table 12

Summary Measure on Stronger Regional Structure

If there were some form of a new stronger regional structure that worked on region-wide issues such as...

- *Metrorail funding;*
- *Traffic congestion on the roads;*
- *Job skills and education; and*
- *Housing the growing workforce...*

Would you see this as a very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, or very negative thing?



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Table 13

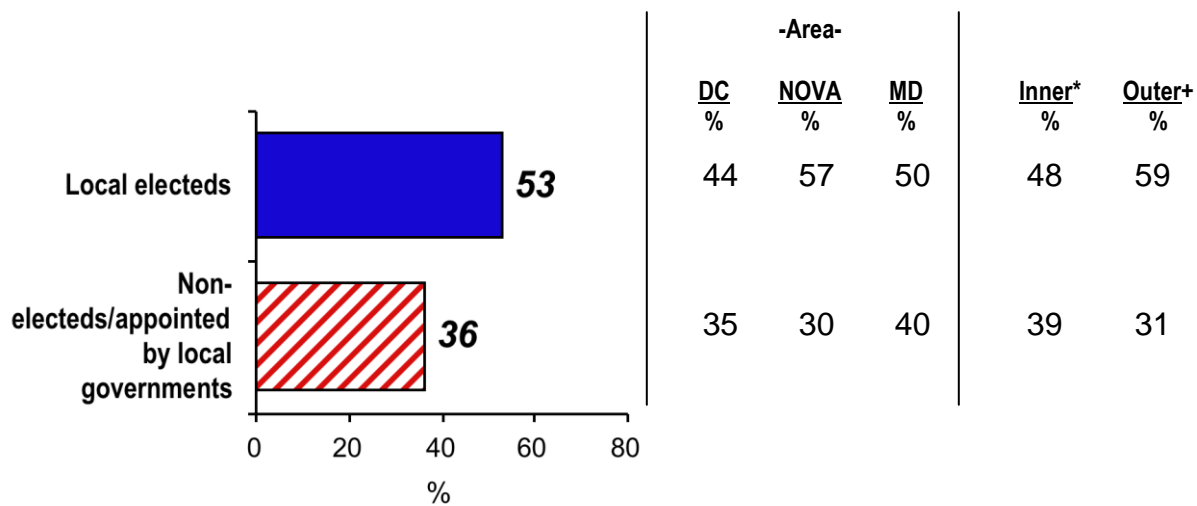
Preferred Leadership of Stronger Regional Structure

If there were such a new stronger regional structure, would you want it led ...?

- *By local elected officials from each of the area's local governments.*

--OR--

- *By qualified or non-elected citizens representing each of the local jurisdictions appointed by the current local government officials.*



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